

MINUTES

**Virginia Cave Board
Saturday, December 4, 2004
Virginia Program Office of The Nature Conservancy, Charlottesville, Virginia**

Virginia Cave Board Members Present

Ms. Barbara L. Moss, Chairman
Mr. Bob Barns, Treasurer
Dr. Kurt Buhlmann, Vice Chairman
Mr. Joe Davis
Ms Andrea Futrell
Mr. Drew Harrison
Ms. Judy Molnar
Ms. Nikki Rovner
Ms. Claire Ward
Mr. Roger Kirchen, for the Director of the Virginia Department of Historical Resources

Virginia Cave Board Members Not Present

Dr. David C. Culver
Dr. John R. Holsinger

Staff Present

Mr. Joey Fagan
Mr. Larry Smith
Mr. Wil Orndorff

Others Present

Ms. Alice Davis
Dr. Ernst H. Kastning
Ms. Karen M. Kastning

Call to Order

Ms. Barbara Moss called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and declared a quorum present.

Introduction and Announcements

Ms. Moss welcomed members, staff, and guests. All in attendance introduced themselves.

Ms. Nikki Rovner welcomed the Virginia Cave Board and guests on behalf of The Nature Conservancy of Virginia.

Ms. Karen Kastning announced that a Joint Meeting of the Eastern and Southeastern Sections of the National Association of Geoscience Teachers would be held May 11 – 14, 2005 at Radford University, Radford, Virginia.

Approval of Minutes from September 11, 2004

MOTION: Ms. Claire Ward moved that the minutes of the September 11, 2004 meeting of the Virginia Cave Board be approved as corrected.

SECOND: Ms. Judy Molnar Seconded

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurers Report

Mr. Bob Barns submitted the Treasurer's report to the Board.

Old Business

Education Committee

Ms. Moss discussed the 2004 Virginia Cave Week and the status of the Virginia Cave Board Website and possible improvements. The 2004 Cave Week Poster was displayed and made available to those who were present.

2005 Cave Week will be held concurrently with Earth Science Week on October 9 - 15, 2005. The theme for the 2005 Cave Week Poster is water. Efforts will be made to notify teachers about Cave Week by April or May 2005. All show caves in Virginia will have a Cave Board member contact to help coordinate Cave Week activities as well as other outreach work.

Environmental Response Committee

No report

Sinkhole Protection Committee

Ms. Andrea Futrell discussed the work being done by the Sinkhole Protection Committee to help protect the surface water and groundwater resources in Virginia's karst regions. Current laws and regulations with application to sinkhole protection are being reviewed

by committee members. The impact of stormwater entering the groundwater through sinkholes was discussed. The Sinkhole Protection Committee is working with Professor Jesse Richardson of Virginia Tech Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and with the Black Diamond Resources Conservation and Development Council in an effort to identify current treatment of cave and karst issues in existing regulations and guidance documents, at both the state and local government level.

The Sinkhole Protection Committee expressed concern that sinkholes and karst aquifers are being used to receive stormwater runoff. During research on this issue, a committee member discovered a report, previously unknown to any cave board members present, entitled "Highway Runoff in Areas of Karst Topography" written by the Virginia Transportation Council at UVA. DCR staff and committee members will review this report and will bring comments to the Cave Board, which will prepare board comments for the Transportation Council and VDOT.

Ms. Kastning noted that stormwater issues were expressed as a serious concern by citizens in southwest Virginia at recent public meetings held by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality,

Sacrifice Cave Committee

No report

Cave Owners Newsletter

Ms. Futrell reported that articles are being sought for the next issue of the Cave Owners Newsletter. It is hoped that the Cave Owners Newsletter will be published annually.

DCR Karst Program Report

Mr. Wil Orndorff reported on recent work by the DCR Karst Program on stormwater issues in Virginia's karst and recent conversations with representatives from The Virginia Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency. Virginia DOT Hazardous Materials Program Manager Ed Wallingford and the EPA Region III Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program Manager Mark Nelson concurred in correspondence with Mr. Orndorff that only sinkholes whose throats that had been significantly modified to accept stormwater runoff were to be registered as Class V Injection wells by EPA. Mr. Orndorff reported that conversations with EPA Region IV UIC staff revealed that Region IV employed a more inclusive definition of Class V injection wells that essentially included any sinkhole to which runoff from converted land has been diverted.

Possible impacts to Indiana Bats in Rocky Hollow Cave due to active and ongoing logging operations by the High Knob Development Corporation were discussed. A summary of recent interactions with Virginia Department of Forestry, U.S. Forest

Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife personnel relating to the possible impacts were presented to the Board.

The DCR Division of Natural Heritage is working with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to help develop the Virginia Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy in order to protect Tier 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need that are found in caves and groundwater.

The third year's work to develop cave conservation site boundaries has been completed. Eighty conservation sites containing a total of 150 significant caves have been defined.

The DCR Karst Program is preparing a GIS-based Karst Hydrology Atlas for Virginia. The Karst Hydrology Atlas will be accessible on the web.

Karst Education Report

Mr. Orndorff reported that Ms. Carol Zokaites continues to run workshops and is developing new lesson plans. Ms. Zokaites attended the National Science Teachers Association Eastern Area Convention at Richmond, Virginia December 2 – 4, 2004.

Cave Week

2005 Cave Week will be held October 9 - 15, 2005. A more complete discussion of Cave Week took place under committee reports.

Brochure presenting erosion and sedimentation issues with karst

Dr. Ernst Kastning presented a draft copy of "Elements of Erosion and Sediment Control in Karst" to the Board. Members of the Board were asked to review the text and make suggestions and comments to Dr. Kastning by February 15, 2005, in advance of the March 19, 2005 Cave Board Meeting.

Establishment of a Virginia State Bat

Ms. Clare Ward reported on work being done to have legislation introduced to establish the Virginia Big Eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*) as the Virginia State Bat.

Report Filing by Permitted Cave Biologists

Dr. Kurt Buhlmann reported that he, Larry Smith and Natural Heritage Program Director Tom Smith had developed stronger cave collection permit reporting requirements for biological investigators in Virginia caves.

New Business

Sinkhole Protection

Issues regarding the importance of protecting sinkholes and related cave and karst groundwater resource were discussed under committee reports.

Public Comments

Management Guidelines for State-Owned Caves

Mr. Larry Smith reported that the Department of Conservation and Recreation Division of Natural Heritage staff is writing management guidelines for caves owned by the State of Virginia.

Falling Springs

Mr. Orndorff reported that MeadWestvaco Corporation has donated a 19-acre tract in Alleghany County containing Falling Springs to DCR.

Grand Caverns

Mr. Roger Kirchen of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) stated that Grand Caverns would be a good candidate for nomination for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places & Virginia Landmarks Register. Mr. Kirchen expressed DHR's willingness to assist the Upper Valley Regional Parks Authority in preparing a Preliminary Information Form (PIF) that would provide the necessary information to enable the DHR Architectural Evaluation Team to determine eligibility of Grand Caverns for listing on the register. Mr. Kirchen discussed the many advantages to landowners of having a landmark such as Grand Caverns included on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.

Thanks to The Nature Conservancy of Virginia

The Cave Board expressed its appreciation to The Nature Conservancy of Virginia for hosting the meeting.

Set Next Meeting Date

The next meeting the Virginia Cave Board will be held March 19, 2005 at Endless Caverns at New Market, Virginia.

Adjournment

Mr. Joe Davis moved the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Judy Molnar seconded. Dr. Buhlmann adjourned the meeting at 3:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara L. Moss
Chairman

Joseph H. Fagan
Secretary